

Apr. 18 / Administration of George Bush, 1991

The President. They said what they think; that's what Governors do.

Note: The exchange began at 10:05 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Gov-

ernors John Ashcroft of Missouri, Roy Romer of Colorado, and Terry E. Branstad of Iowa participated in the exchange. Lamar Alexander was Secretary of Education.

Remarks at a National Education Strategy Briefing *April 18, 1991*

Thank you all, and thank you for coming here to the White House. Let me just salute our Secretary of Education, Lamar Alexander, and say how much I'm relying on him. Not only has he and his new team formulated a plan that I think will be very well-received, but knowing him, he'll be driving us all to see that we follow through—something I'm determined to do. But I salute him.

I had a meeting early on with the Governors who are here, and I thanked them. We're approaching this in a totally non-partisan way. We have Democratic and Republican Governors in the meeting at the White House. They subsequently met with some of the business leaders who are here, and I salute them and thank them for taking the time in the leadership roles that they have undertaken. And I will salute the State legislators who are with us, our education community leaders, and other business leaders who didn't attend—some of the small business leaders and others who have been involved in this from the very beginning.

So, we're dedicating this day, this kickoff day, to our new education strategy. And seeing everyone here tells me that there is a great sense of determination and support out there for what we'll be trying to do. There's a new optimism in this country, a renewal of a can-do spirit that made our country great. I can't think of a better reason to put this renewed sense of duty and confidence to work than for the sake of our children. Many of you have been doing that all your lives, and now the rest of us want to join in and do what we can to help.

We're on our way. Many of you in this room, Lamar tells me, have taken the cru-

cial first steps and started programs to rejuvenate an education system that wasn't living up to our expectations. We've already moved beyond the days of issuing report after report about the dismal state of our schools. We don't need any more of those. Today we're trying to put the focus on the future and do something about this state of affairs.

This afternoon, I'll unveil an aggressive and innovative new education strategy. Some of you already know this, and maybe some don't, so let me just summarize for you the strategy in just a few sentences. For today's students, we must make existing schools better and more accountable. For tomorrow's students—that's the next generation—we must create a new generation of American schools. For all of us—for the adults who think our school days are over—we've got to become a nation of students, to recognize that learning is a lifelong process. Finally, outside our schools, we must cultivate communities where learning can happen. This strategy will bring us even closer to making sure that America's children receive the best education in the world.

We're not afraid of new ideas. And there are a lot of great ideas out there, out in the States and the cities and the communities, in the education and business communities. My job is to do everything in my power to give these ideas a chance. With Secretary Alexander and his strong new team, and with all of you, I think we're on our way to an exciting new chapter. I like to think of it as a true renaissance in American education.

All of you are also proof that this new education strategy just begins with our

schools, that our dedication doesn't end when the bell rings at the end of every school day. Every single American has a stake in what we're starting today, and I am confident that we'll rise to the challenge.

Forty or fifty years from now, some fifth or sixth grader who's sitting in a classroom somewhere in America today will be standing here in my place. Because of the commitment that I am told exists in the Department of Education, here in this room, in the various communities represented, whether it's the Governors or business or some in labor so interested in all of this,

or the State legislators—because of that commitment, I know in my heart that that person—she or he—will have had every opportunity that this great country has to offer.

So, let's go to work. I know we can do it. And I'm with you all the way. Thank you so very much for your involvement. And may God bless this effort and our great country. Thank you all.

Note: The President spoke at 11:23 a.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander.

Nomination of Mike Hayden To Be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior

April 18, 1991

The President today announced his intention to nominate Mike Hayden, of Kansas, to be Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife at the Department of the Interior. He would succeed Constance Bastine Hariman.

Governor Hayden served as Governor of the State of Kansas from 1987 to 1990. Prior to this he served as a speaker of the Kansas House of Representatives, 1982–1986. From 1978 to 1982, he served as chairman of the house ways and means

committee, Kansas House of Representatives.

Governor Hayden graduated from Kansas State University with a bachelor of science degree in wildlife conservation, 1966, and a master of science degree in biology from Fort Hays State University, 1974. Governor Hayden served in the U.S. Army, 1968–1970. He was born March 16, 1944, in Colby, KS. Governor Hayden is married, has two children, and resides in Topeka, KS.

Address to the Nation on the National Education Strategy

April 18, 1991

Thank you all for joining us here in the White House today. Let me thank the Speaker for being with us, and the majority leader; other distinguished Members, committee heads and ranking members, and very important education committees here with us today. I want to salute the Governors, the educators, the business and the labor leaders, and especially want to single out the National Teachers of the Year. I believe we have 10 of the previous 11 Teachers of the Year with us here today,

and that's most appropriate and most fitting.

But together, all of us, we will underscore the importance of a challenge destined to define the America that we'll know in the next century.

For those of you close to my age, the 21st century has always been a kind of shorthand for the distant future—the place we put our most far-off hopes and dreams. And